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THE HIGHER CRITICISM

ITS ASSUMPTIONS, METHODS AND EFFECTS

A SKETCH

BY THE

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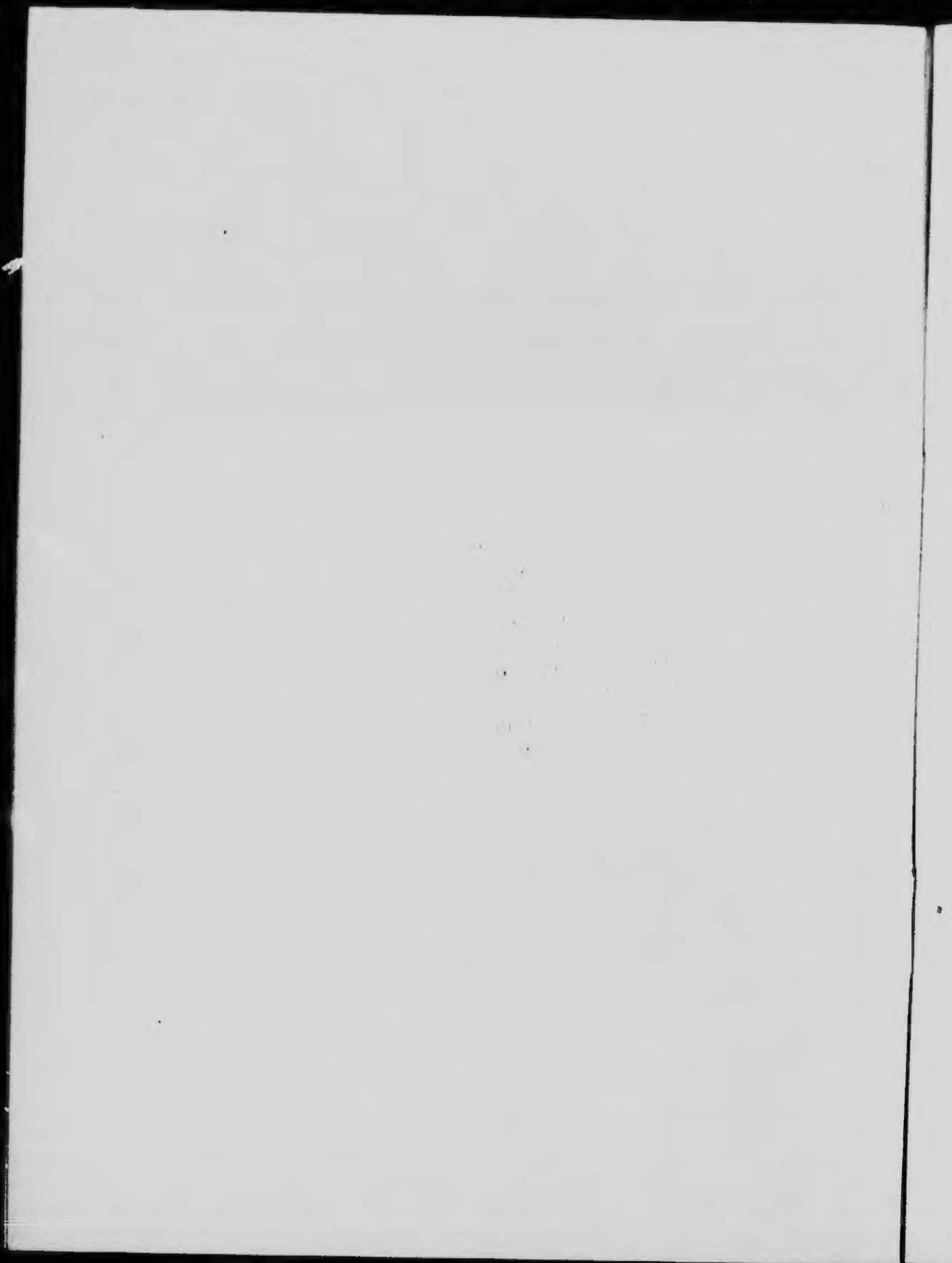
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LORD BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF ONTARIO,
ARE INSCRIBED
WITH SINCERE RESPECT AND REGARD,
THESE "WORDS FOR TRUTH."

PREFACE.

The writer of this sketch on the Higher Criticism (which was by request prepared for a Ruri-decanal meeting held in Prescott on May 6th, 1902) has been induced to publish it in its present form, in the hope that it may be servicable to some who, without entering deeply into the subject, would be glad to gain an insight into the true inwardness of this most recent attempt of rationalism to dethrone the Holy Scriptures. With the object of making this issue more complete, some matter has been added to the original paper, and a number of illustrative notes have been appended.



Observations On the Assumptions, Methods, and Effects of "The Higher Criticism."

In what I am about to say upon the subject of "THE HIGHER CRITICISM," it is not my intention, even if I had the ability, to enter into the depths of this important, difficult, and, just now, among Biblical students, burning question. All I propose to do is to make some observations upon the Assumptions, Methods and Effects of the new critical treatment of the Old Testament Scriptures. And perhaps it may be as well to mention just here that I employ throughout the terms "Higher Critic" and "Higher Criticism," as they are now generally used, to designate a certain School of critics and criticism, which bishop Ellicott prefers to call "Analytical," represented by Reuss and Graf, Kuenen and Wellhausen, R. W. Smith, Cheyne, and Driver.

It is not necessary to dive very far into the mysteries of the Higher Criticism before perceiving that, in the present aspect of the subject, much more is involved in these modern discussions on the Old Testament than the date, authorship, and mode of composition of the Books, particularly of the Pentateuch. It will soon be discovered that underlying all these questions is a theory which professes to interpret the history of Israel according to the principle of a continuous natural development, from the lowest stages of belief up to monotheism, and from primitive usage up to the complete Levitical system.

This theory was not always in vogue among Higher Critics. Its adoption marks a remarkable turning point in the history of Old Testament criticism. Before this, the criticism had proceeded mainly on literary grounds. Diction, style, ideas, the connection of paragraphs and sentences, supplied the staple arguments and furnished the criteria from which all conclusions were drawn. And the data being so vague, no sure footing could be found for a common standing ground, and so, speaking generally, every imaginable difference prevailed among the critics. But in 1866 Prof. Karl H. Graf, of Gottingen, published his essay on "The Historical Books of the Old Testament," in which he proposed the complete reversal of the main results of the older criticism, by placing the Law later than the Prophets, by a big leap over the yawning gulf of five centuries. It certainly does not help to inspire confidence in the newer critical methods to know that this leap was actually made, and for no other reason than because the development theory rendered such an alteration necessary.

The Grafian hypothesis, as it was called, after the name of its author, did not at once commend itself to the German mind, and Graf himself was mainly to blame for its temporary disfavor, by separating the legal portion of the Elohist or Priestly document (containing Leviticus and related portions of Exodus and Numbers) from its historical setting and transferring that portion alone to its new post-exilian position, while he left the history where it was, as the oldest constituent of the Pentateuch. Such a separation, however, was impossible. The history and the laws were stamped with the same characteristics and could not be torn apart. While the controversy was raging, Dr. Ab. Kuenen, professor in Leyden, came upon the scene. He boldly grasped the situation. He thought that Graf's

view supplied the key to the history of the Old Testament development, that he himself had been seeking. To his mind, it disposed of doubts he had long felt, and for the first time gave rational order to the details of the Pentateuchal legislation. But Kuenen corrected Graf's mistake. He saw that consistency required that the ritual and historical parts must go together, and so he maintained against all opposing critics the post-exilic origin of both. In spite, however, of Kuenen's skill and power, the development theory hung fire until 1878, when Dr. Julius Wellhausen, of Marburg, by his brilliant advocacy of it, took Continental scholars by storm, and secured its triumph all along the line. The development hypothesis is now the underlying assumption of all principal works by the Higher Critics everywhere. Of course such a theory, which regards the Bible as the resultant of purely human forces, is simple naturalism, as opposed to supernaturalism, but then, Graf, Kuenen, Wellhausen, the central pillars of the new critical system, were pronounced naturalists. "The Hebrew religion," Wellhausen declared, "was a purely natural growth, an evolution obedient to the law at work in all ages of the world." Kuenen in the opening of his "Religion of Israel," says: "Our standpoint is sketched in a single stroke, as it were, by the manner in which this work sees the light. It does not stand entirely alone, but is one of a number of monographs on the principal religions. For us the Israelitish is one of these religions, nothing less, but also nothing more." Not very far behind their masters come the British and American critics. Prof. Cheyne in his preface to his Bampton lectures, thus states his relation to this evolutionary criticism: "In 1870, I passed into the school of Graf and Kuenen." In the body of his lectures, he speaks of the Bible doctrines as developed germs, not revelations from age to age. The Old

Testament religion he tells us was no "heaven-descended theology ;" it was arranged and set forth by the leaders of Jewish thought, who provided a programme of history and doctrine in accordance with a theory of their own. Canon Driver, while careful not to give expression to extreme views in his "Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," and not adopting Wellhausen's views in all respects, nevertheless acknowledges himself in general accord with the development hypothesis. In his notes on page 16 of the preface, he remarks that the "new historical setting in which criticism places many parts of the Old Testament and the correlation which it establishes between the religious history of the Old Testament and the principle of a progressive revelation, constitute a strong confirmation of the truth of the critical position." More plainly in an article of his in the Contemporary Review, he says : "Wellhausen's theory, or one approximating to it, harmonizes most completely with the facts of the Old Testament."

Prof. Robertson Smith ('Old Testament in the Jewish church' p. 306) leaves no room for doubting to what School he belongs, when he claims for the "New theory, an overwhelming weight of the most earnest and sober scholarship," represented, it would appear, by the writings of those whom he mentions favourably in his preface to Wellhausen's Prolegomena, namely, "Vatke and Reuss, Lagarde and Graf, Kuenen and Wellhausen, on whose side is found almost every younger scholar of mark."

On this side of the water, when Dr. Gladden, who claims that he follows the leadership of "Conservative critics" only, tells us that "the Sacred Writings are not inspired in the sense we have commonly given that word," and wishes to reduce Revelation itself to what he calls "historical revelation," to acts not words, or as he expresses it

again, "to the superintending care of God over the progress of history;" "His moral leadership in history," we may estimate how nearly, to a minimum, even, so-called, moderate critics reduce the supernatural element in the Bible.

The truth is, as Bishop Ellicott observes, in his "Christus Comprobator," that "the difference between the views of the foreign critics and their English disciples is very slight; the latter accept the analytical view in the main, while modifying certain details and minimizing to some extent their phraseology." It is true, indeed, that some have been more daring than others; Kuenen, Wellhausen and Cheyne have advanced where the more moderate Higher Critics would at present refuse to follow, viz., to the denial of the historical truth of Christianity. Yet this is only a question of degree.* The path trodden is the same, and from Cheyne's career, we can see that it inclines downward to unbelief.

Doubtless the fact that such a theory falls in with the spirit of the age, which is under the sway of evolutionary

*In an article by the late Hon. W. Gladstone in the S. S. Times, Philadelphia, August 1890, on "The Mosaic Legislation," the following observation occurs.

"The result of this negative criticism ought to be viewed in its extreme form, and this for several reasons: Such as, that with the lapse of time it continually adopts new negations. That the more conservative of the schools exhibit to us no principle which separates them in the mass from the bolder disintegration, and that which is now the ultima thule of the system may a short time hence appear only to have been a stage on the way to new positions yet undreamt of." The correctness of this observation is confirmed by the new departure of Canon Cheyne into the region of astrology for an explanation of the names and characters of early Hebrew history. See the January number of the Nineteenth Century.

ideas, has contributed to its popularity. It suits admirably the Darwinian habit of mind which pervades modern society, to frame a theory of Israel's religion in accordance with those laws of natural development which are supposed to have governed the growth of all the religious systems of the world. Mosaism and Christianity can now appear side by side with Buddhism and Mohamedanism in the Science of Comparative Religion, all as being the outgrowth of the working of human instincts or cravings, and of the effort to give expression to sentiments, hopes and aspirations common to mankind.

Such, then, is the huge fundamental Assumption of the modern critical school. Let us now go on to see how they employ it to account for everything in the Bible.

This brings me to speak of the Methods of this School. We have, then, to figure to ourselves these Higher Critics coming to the examination of the Old Testament Scriptures, armed with this theory of natural development. Their intention is to lay the theory along the facts and to work the facts into the theory; but lo, they find the ground already occupied by a scheme which is in complete antagonism to their own, namely, that of supernatural development. This is undeniably the view which the Biblical writers take of the history of their nation. It is patent in every part of the books themselves; and it must be confessed that it is wonderfully consistent in its tenor. Read in the light of this theory, the Biblical narrative winds along its course perfectly naturally and easily. Its complete consistency is proved by the fact that all down the centuries and until quite recently, no one ever thought that any other account could be derived from the Scriptures, than that the history of the Hebrew nation is a history of miraculous intervention, and their literature the product of Divine inspiration. The problem, then, before

the critics is twofold. First, to explain away the Biblical interpretation of the history ; and, secondly, to fit the facts to the opposite theory. In a word, their task is destructive and constructive.

The critics are well aware of the difficulty of the problem before them, for Kuenen tells us that "the conception of Isarel's religious development, which he dares to form, is totally different from that which anyone may see is set forth in the Old Testament." But what can baffle the ingenuity of the Higher Critics ?

They begin their task by another assumption. They impute bad faith, or something very like it, to the authors of Old Testament history. The Biblical writers say : "we write thus, because thus things occurred." The critics reply : "Things did not so occur. What we maintain is that the scheme of the Hebrew writers, whereby they attribute to the Israelites high ideas of duty and a true knowledge of God at the beginning of their history, is an afterthought, which by a process of manipulation of the older documents, and by a systematic presentation of earlier events in the light of the later times at which they wrote, has been made to appear as if it were the original and genuine development." (Robertson).

Upon this understanding, which the critics do not argue about, but simply take for granted, they proceed to the analysis of the documents. These as having been worked over in the interests of a theory, cannot, of course, be trustworthy throughout, and it now becomes the business of the critics to find out the truth about them. This they do in a manner which suggest the peculiar features of the Inquisition. They place the books on the rack of a cruel and harsh criticism, and rack them to pieces ; when dislocated and disintegrated in every part, they are prepared to deny the truth of their own old and wondrous story, and

to bear out the assumptions of their inquisitors. This is no overdrawn picture or caricature of modern critical methods ; if anyone thinks it is, let him listen to what Professor Robertson says on the 466th page of his interesting volume, "The Early Religion of Israel." "The hypothesis of Graf," he says, "carries with it the assumption that the narratives of the Pentateuch are not history in the proper sense of the word at all, but the product of late imaginative writers, and, in short, fictitious. And not only are the narratives of the Pentateuch so treated ; the historical and prophetic books are in a similar manner discredited, so as to be admissible as testimony only after they have been expurgated or adjusted on the principles of the underlying theory. The historical books, we are told, were written long after the events they relate, and even when they contain the record of historical facts, these records are overlaid with later interpretations of the facts, or even glossed over to obliterate them. Even the Prophetic books are not to be relied upon to determine the religious history, for the books, in the first place, have undergone great alterations in the process of canonization, and in the second place, even where there is an unambiguous declaration of a prophet as to a certain sequence of events, it is open to us to accept or reject his statement on critical grounds. Modern critical writers, in fact, can scarcely lay their hand on a single book and say : Here is a document to be relied upon to give a fair, unbiased, and untarnished account of things as they are."

And now, having reduced the books to the condition just described by their destructive criticism, the work thereafter is constructive. Having separated the precious from the vile, the nucleus of fact from the legendary setting, the historical from the pseudo-historical, the early fragments from the later accretions and editorial additions,

the Higher Critics, out of the sound materials that remain after this sifting process, proceed to construct what they like to describe as a scientific history of the Hebrew nation, fitting each document, each section, each fragment, into its proper position, like the pieces of a Chinese puzzle, all along the line of natural evolution, the Prophets earlier than the Law, the Psalms later than both, for the most part, according to Cheyne, in the Persian or Greek period—the whole so compacted together as to exhibit the actual historic process of expansion, from the lowest to the highest conception of deity, from the simplest observances to the elaborate ceremonial of the priestly code of Ezra's days.

In this way everything in the Bible is accounted for, utilized or rejected, and when completed, the fabric has all the attractiveness of a new creation ; order has been evolved out of chaos, "the touch of genius has transformed a mere heap of stones into a gorgeous palace, or a grand harmonious temple." What wonder if the critics contemplate their new creation with entire satisfaction, as we may judge from the praise they lavish on one another. See with what gratification Professor Pfeiderer hailed the advent of the book that secured the triumph of Graf's hypothesis. "I welcomed this work of Wellhausen's," he says. "more than almost any other ; for the pressing problem of the history of the Old Testament appeared to me to be at last solved, in a manner consonant to the principle of human evolution, which I am compelled to apply to the history of all religion."

But now, I ask, what are we to think of this system of criticism ? Does it deserve the name of scientific ? Is it not rather a travesty of scientific methods ? I will let someone answer for me who has the very best right to be heard—Sir J. W. Dawson. In the July number of the

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Nineteenth Century, 1890, he writes as follows : "I cannot accept the estimate some have of the scientific value of the so-called Higher Criticism, of which Robertson Smith, in England, and Wellhausen, in Germany, may be taken as advanced exponents. To me the methods of these men appear to be the reverse of those of legitimate science, inasmuch as they are not inductive but rather analogical and speculative, while it is their habit to build the most stupendous conclusions on the smallest possible basis of fact, or even of plausible conjecture. Their ingenious attempts to invert the pyramid of historical truth, and poise it upon its apex, would, if applied to any department of natural science, involve it in hopeless confusion, and would merit the reprobation of all legitimate, scientific workers."

But there is more to be said in answer to the critics' assumption that the "Israelitish religion is nothing more" than one of the principal religions of the world. There are outstanding facts about the Hebrew race too wonderful and manifest to be gainsaid or overlooked, of which, nevertheless, our critics take no account whatever. One of these facts relates to the Bible itself. How is it that a people, notoriously lacking in originality, should have been the authors of a literature, unsurpassed for moral beauty and grandeur, and which has guided the wisdom of ages, and even now shows no signs of losing its pre-eminence? That is one fact. The other is even more marvellous, if possible. It differentiates Israel's religious history from all others when we behold the ruined and downtrodden remnant of an intolerant race, at a time of great moral declension, giving birth to a religion whose spirituality is unique, whose sympathies, aims and hopes are universal, and whose influence in the world wheresoever it has penetrated, has been overmastering.

Surely these two facts, which give the Hebrew people a

marvellous position among earth's races, should prepare the Higher Critics for finding in the history of that people something more and something very different from the phenomena which other religions present. "To come, therefore, to the examination of Israel's religion," says Prof. Robertson, "with a formula, or equation, that will represent the history of all religions, and then apply it to the religion of Israel, is to prejudge the whole question in a most unscientific way, and to run in the teeth of historical fact." "The science of Comparative Religion," says Professor Robertson, again, "is legitimate and most useful; but it becomes unscientific when it is a levelling science." We know how the Bible explains the problems raised by these and the other equally marvellous facts of Jewish history, by saying that they were a divinely guided people, that their religion was originated and maintained by supernatural interpositions at sundry times and in divers manners, and surely, if the forces which entered into the development of their history cannot be explained on natural principles, the inference is legitimate, nay, unavoidable, that they must have come from above. "It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

Another observable thing about the methods of this new criticism, and which is largely responsible for its surprising results, is that it is almost altogether a subjective process. It relies upon internal evidence alone. De Wette, whose Introduction to the Old Testament marks an epoch in the history of the Higher Criticism, proclaimed this as the method of his school. Criticism, he maintained, must henceforth set aside tradition, and get to the facts by means of its own researches. All external sources of information, it was said, were wanting; but their loss was not material, and by no means to be regretted; for it called in-

to existence that which after all was the surest guide—the Higher Criticism.

This principle has become one of the chief corner-stones of the new system. Now, on the very face of it, such a method of criticism is necessarily imperfect and unreliable. It is altogether one-sided. It does not compare its conclusions with anything. It does not bring them to the test of any form of contemporaneous evidence bearing upon them, consequently there is ample scope for the indulgence of speculation or fiction to any extent. As Rev. Dr. Morgan Dix remarks in one of his sermons : "It practically invests the modern critic with a power of intuitive discernment, an ability to recognize truth without any aid from historic or other facts. In examining the sacred canon, the critic has no new facts to show; yet he says, with an air of supreme authority, if not actual omniscience. 'This writer was a romancer and fabulist; that writer never lived; this book was not written by him whose name it has borne between two and three thousand years; these discourses and this history were the invention of subtle priestly conspirators.' And when asked how he has made these astounding discoveries, he has not a word of historic testimony to present, but he says: My criticism proves them; modern learning establishes them; they are the ascertained results of the best thought of the day; in fact, these results thus paraded before us, come down, at last, to nothing better than guess-work and fancy; they are the fruit of difficulties which lie in the mind of the critic, and have no foundation in legitimate enquiry. They are the result of a process correctly described as 'free conjecture operating upon the Sacred text.'"

What wonder if this kind of criticism should have broken down wherever it could be tested. We may recall the failure of similar methods in the sphere of Grecian litera-

ture, when a German scholar, F. A. Wolf, more than a century ago undertook to prove that the poems which go under the name of Homer are not his (if, indeed, such a person ever lived), and did not exist in their present form for centuries after Homer's time, when they were put together out of various independent epic songs, the production of a number of unknown authors, called Rhapsodists. For a time the Wolfian theory carried all before it. Of course there was no external evidence to support it. Like the higher criticism of the Old Testament the contents of the works themselves supplied the only materials for forming a judgment. But notwithstanding the support it received from scholars as learned, and critics as keen as our modern Biblical critics, the attempt to dethrone Homer failed. Towards the close of the last century, a reaction set in, the traditional belief was reinstated. The contention dwindled to nothing. The issue is now dead.

An amusing example of the flimsiness of such criticism is that of Scherer's brilliant analysis of the Prologue of *Faust*, which distributed its parts to their proper periods, widely separated, of Goethe's life, on the ground of deep reaching differences of style and internal inconsistencies, such as were thought inexplicable save on the supposition of composition at different times and subsequent combination. But another scholar, Ehrich Schmidt, publishes the oldest manuscript of the poem, and lo! "it is the 'young Goethe' who wrote the prologue essentially as it now stands, in a single gush; it is the same 'young Goethe,' who assumes the style, at the same time, of an effervescent youngster, and of a cynical grey-beard."

Prof. Margoliouth, a Semitic scholar of the highest repute, mentions in his "Lines of Defence," page 279, a remarkable case wherein the Higher Critics employed their methods

to their own confusion, by involving themselves in the most serious error that had ever been committed in the dates and analyzing of documents. It seems that a composition called the Cairene Ecclesiasticus was discovered a few years ago. After a close critical investigation it was pronounced by all the leading Hebraists to be a work of the 2nd century B. C., more than that it was declared to be the source of the existing Greek and Syriac translations of Ecclesiasticus. It afterwards turned out to be the production of the eleventh century, after Christ. It was proved, moreover, to be itself a compilation from those translations. The critics had blundered egregiously, both as to date and source. They had made a mistake of twelve or thirteen centuries, and they had taken the offspring for the parent. What reliance can be placed on a method of criticism so plainly inconsequential?

Before we leave this division of the subject, there is a question to be put and answered. Is the contention of the critical School from De Wette to Driver true? Is it true that no external evidence for the age and authorship of the Sacred Books exists? Emphatically no, it is not true. External information does exist. There is outstanding testimony; there are materials whereby the truth of the critical views may be tested. First of all there is Tradition. "The Jews," says Prof. Driver, "possess no tradition worthy of real credence or regard," while Dr. Briggs, of New York, sneers at the arguments of the "Traditionalists," as he calls them, as "speculative dogmas," as "appeals to popular prejudice." But Messieurs Higher Critics, you cannot, by a stroke of the pen, rule out of court the witness of a whole nation. You cannot give the lie to a theory of Bible history, which has been substantially accepted by the Synagogue and the Church for 2,000 years. We are aware, gentlemen, that it is quite according to your

lofty and dogmatic style to say, with Dr. Briggs: "In the field of scholarship the question is settled. It only remains for the ministry and people to accept it, and adapt themselves to it;" but we respectfully decline on your mere dictum to believe that the Jewish race was composed of a people so dull and unreflective that they had no memory of or veneration for the past. No, we shall maintain, until the contrary is infallibly proved, that the Bible contains at least as credible and correct a history of Israel as the record of other nations are, and that the traditions of the race were as scrupulously guarded, and as intelligently handed down as those of other peoples. Nay, more, the Jews, believing that their Scriptures were the Oracles of God and that they were their divinely appointed keepers, preserved them with passionate fidelity,* depositing them in the innermost and holiest apartment of the Sanctuary. There Moses caused the Torah Roll to be laid up, and there 700 years afterwards, it was discovered by Hilkiah in the days of Josiah. The testimony of Philo and Josephus is just what we should expect with regard to such a people as the Jews were, and are to this day. Josephus, who was but thirty years old at the death of St. Paul, speaking of the whole volume, which we call the Old Testament, says: "Although so many ages have now elapsed since these books were written, no one yet has ever dared either to

*Prof. W. R. Smith, in "The Old Testament in the Jewish Church," referring to the fidelity of the Jews in preserving and transmitting sacred text of the O. T., says, "The Jews, from the time when their national life was extinguished, and their whole soul concentrated upon the preservation of the monuments of the past, devoted most strict and punctilious attention to the exact transmission of the received text, down to the smallest peculiarity of spelling, and even certain irregularities of writing," (p. 70).

add anything to them, or take anything from them, or change anything in them ; for it is a principle received by every Jew from his birth that these writings are the revelation of God, to cling to them as such, and if occasion should require, cheerfully to die in their behalf." Philo's testimony is equally strong. Moreover, it was because of their adherence to Scripture that the Jews suffered under the persecution of Antiochus.

And when to the tradition of the Jewish nation, we add that of the Christian Church, of the Apostles and early Christians who dwelt in the glow of Pentecost, of the great fathers and students and scholars, who have from the beginning known and used the Scriptures ; of the Catholic Councils, and of the interrupted and universal assent of nearly two Christian milleniums, I think that the position of the "Traditionalists" is well nigh impregnable, and there is small danger that we shall ever have to lower the banner that floats over our heads, emblazoned with the Vincen-tian motto :

"Semper, Ubique, et ab Omnibus."

But it seems to me that the question of the trustworthiness of Jewish tradition is a more serious one for the Higher Critics than they would care to acknowledge. In reality, it places them on the horns of a huge dilemma. For if, on the one hand, they accept Jewish tradition concerning the Bible, their criticism is falsified ; but if, on the other hand, they reject it, they no longer have any Bible to criticize. For how does it happen that the Higher Critics can read their Hebrew Scriptures ? Without a knowledge of the vowel sounds they could not do so. Yet we know that the vowels remained unwritten from the time of the composition of the several books until about the middle of the eighth century ! How, then, was the vocalization of the Old Testament preserved ? There is no other re-

ply, than by Jewish tradition.* "The correct pronunciation of the words," says Prof. Margoliouth, "was handed down from father to son, from teacher to pupil through a period of more than 1,000 years."

Now, I think, it would be in order for the critics to explain how it is that they can and do rely upon Jewish tradition extending through more than ten centuries, for such minutiae as vowel points, but when it comes to important questions, such as the authorship and dates of their Scriptures, they contemptuously discard it—refuse to give it a hearing

But tradition is not the only external testimony available to support the credibility of the Old Testament writings. There is another witness that is day by day becoming more powerful, as it goes forth conquering and to conquer the Higher Critics. I refer to modern arch-

*Speaking of the system of Vowel Points invented by the Masorets, so called because they were the "Possessors of tradition—that is of the tradition of the proper way of writing the Bible," Prof. Smith says:

"Now let me ask you to realize precisely how these scribes proceeded in dealing with the Bible. They had nothing before them but the bare text denuded of its vowels, so that the same words might often be read and interpreted in two different ways." To exemplify this ambiguity the Professor mentions the Hebrew word HMMTTH which depended on the vocalization whether it was translated "the bed," (as in Gen. 47: 31) or "the staff," (as in Heb. xi. 21, after the lxx). He then proceeds, "Beyond the bare text, which in this way was often ambiguous, the Scribes had no guide but Oral Teaching. They had no rules of grammar to go by: the kind of Hebrew which they themselves wrote often admitted grammatical constructions which the old language forbade, and when they came to an obsolete word or idiom, they had no guide to its meaning unless their masters had told them that the pronunciation and the sense were so and so." (pp 50, 51.)

aeological discoveries. Everywhere the stones cry out against the critical conclusions. Everywhere where the spade of the excavator is at work, some unexpected find attests or else illustrates some incident or declaration of the Scriptural narratives. For example, from the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates records have been brought, dating before Christ more than 2,000 years, which corroborate in many essential particulars the Hebrew accounts of the Creation and Deluge.

Again, at the very moment, when the critics were proclaiming the unhistorical character of Chedorlaomer's campaign, and the meeting between Melchizedek and "Abram, the Hebrew," described in the 14th chapter of Genesis, clay records of the past rose up and vindicated the trustworthiness of the narratives in the most complete and unexpected manner.

It used to be an axiom with the critics that the art of literary composition among the Canaanites and Israelites was unknown before Moses, and that consequently he could not have written the Pentateuch, but recent discoveries, especially the discovery at Tel-el-Amarna, in Upper Egypt, of tablets belonging to the century before the Exodus, have wiped this assumption out of existence, by proving that there must have been at that time throughout Western Asia plenty of schools and teachers as well as of pupils and books.

Further, when the Higher Critics impugned the credibility of the Books of Kings, because of their allusions to Hittites living north of Syria (no such people being known to classical writers), the Assyrian monuments disclosed the fact that not only did the Hittite tribes inhabit the very district mentioned in Kings, but that once they were a very powerful and important people.

Again, the critics objected to the books of Esther and

Daniel, that their descriptions of Oriental customs and institutions violated all probability, but discovery and history have united in compelling the critical writers of the present day to retract their statements and to admit that what is written in those books is not romance, but fact.

Once more, Prof. Robertson (5th chapt.) mentions a remarkable feature of the earlier sacred records, which is at variance with critical conclusions as to the mode of their composition and historic value, and that is, "the extraordinary correspondence between the Biblical accounts and the localities in which they are placed." "The ordinary reader (he says) will find it very hard to believe that in 'the manifold variants and repetitions of the same stories' this feature of minutely accurate local picturing could have been preserved. And when we take into account that not only in the stories of the patriarchs, but everywhere in the historical books, this accuracy is maintained, and bear in mind the liability to error which is inherent in local transmission, we have a problem to solve which cannot be brushed aside by the obiter dictu of the critics."

The words of Prof. Sayce will suitably conclude this particular: "It is not possible here to go in detail through the numerous cases in which the archaeological discoveries of the last few years have re-established the credit of the writers of the Old Testament, and dissipated the ingenious objections that have been raised against them. Assyriology, Egyptology, pre-historic archaeology, even explorations in southern Arabia and Asia Minor have alike been contributing to this result—the vindication of the historical character of the Biblical narratives." But now, what are we to think of Dr. Driver and his school, who in the face of the facts that have been brought forward, unblushingly assert that there is no external evidence on which they can de-

pend ; that all the materials for forming their conclusions lie within the books themselves ?

But this false critical canon receives its final contradiction, and the old view of the Bible its crowning confirmation from the lips of Him Who was proclaimed in heaven to be the "Faithful and True Witness." Jesus Christ, in passing through the world, stamped with His own Divine authority the Old Testament volume, and having His infallible testimony to these Scriptures, that they are indeed what they have all along professed to be, we need no other as we can have no higher warrant ; as Canon Liddon said in his famous sermon on "The Worth of the Old Testament." "For Christians it will be enough to know that our Lord Jesus Christ set the seal of His infallible sanction on the whole of the Old Testament. He found the Hebrew canon as we have it in our hands today, and He treated it as an authority that was above discussion." The whole sermon is worth learning by heart. Our blessed Lord with His own lips quoted from most of the twenty-two books composing the Old Testament volume, but the question of His recognition of them is not so much concerned with single quotations, as with his whole method of treating them and speaking of them. For example, He constantly applies to the Scriptures, as a whole, the term *Graphe* or *Graphai*, which is used fifty-one times in the New Testament, but never once in the mere sense of writing ; always in that holy, and as may call it, technical or appropriated sense, which we attach to the word *Scripture*.*

*The Rev. D. W. Bullinger, D. D., England, has some remarks on the Revised Version of II Tim. iii, 16, which are worth transcribing. "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable." This is not English, to say nothing of Greek.

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Again, our Lord's life was nothing but a fulfilment of the Scriptures from beginning to end "I am come," He said, "to fulfil the law and the prophets," accordingly He did all that the Scriptures prescribed. He kept them with minute care, and He caused His disciples to keep them with Him. Furthermore, our blessed Saviour, when in the perfection of His risen state He revisited His disciples, caused them to read His history in the same Old Testament; for beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." And surely, it is no collection, or jumble rather, of human writings for the express purpose of comprehending which he opened, as we are told he did, His disciples' understandings.

The Higher Critics, instead of adjusting their theories to accord with the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ as to

It so happens that the very same Greek construction occurs several times in the New Testament e. g., Rom. vii, 12; I Cor. xi, 30; II Cor. x, 10; I Tim i, 15, II iii, iv 4 9; II Tim. iii, 16; Heb. iv, 13. The A. V. translates all these nine passages in precisely the same way, and on the same principles. But the Revised Version translates eight of them in one way (i. e. like the A. V.) while its renders one on quite a different principle.

To be Consistent the revisers should have translated these eight passages in the following way: Rom. vii, 12, "The Holy Commandment is also Just;" I Cor. xi, 10, "Many weak ones are also sickly;" II Cor. x, 10, "His weighty letters are also powerful;" I Tim. i, 15 and iv, 9, "The faithful saying is also worthy of all acceptation;" I Tim. ii, 3, "This good thing is also acceptable;" I Tim. iv, 4, "Every good creature of God is also nothing to be refused;" Heb. iv, 13, "All naked things are also open," etc. But the Revisers do not translate them thus. And the fact that they render the whole of these eight passages, as in the A. V. and single out II Tim. iii, 16 for different treatment, forbids us to accept the inconsistent rendering, and deprives it of all authority.

the Old Testament Scriptures, dare to think of adjusting the God-man to their theories, and thus we have curious and sustained efforts to minimize the amount and decisiveness of His teaching; new discussions on the questions of "accommodation" in His use of the sacred text and a new set of studies on the limitations of our Lord's knowledge as a man, some of which involve an interpretation of the Kenosis, which come perilously near the confines of Nestorianism.* In Canon Liddon's "Divinity of our Lord," and Bishop Ellicott's "Christus Comprobator,"

*I cannot forbear quoting the timely and weighty words of President Hovey, D. D., of Newton Theological Institution, Boston, on the subject of our Lord's human knowledge of the Holy Scriptures:—"But what shall we say of Jesus Christ as a critic? Was He simply the child of His times? Did He bow to human tradition? Had He no spiritual insight? No penetration? No love of truth? No power to detect and expose error? Is there any reason to question the veracity of St. Luke when he says that Jesus, at twelve years of age, was found in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing and asking them questions, while all that heard were amazed at His understanding and His answers? Is there the least evidence or likelihood that His study of the sacred writings was intermitted so much as a week during the next eighteen years? Or the least reason to imagine that it was not as honest and searching, as sagacious and fruitful as that of modern critics? And when after the long period of preparation, he was at last engaged in religious teaching, what Pharisee or Scribe, what Sadduce or lawyer, was able to convict Him of ignorance or of sin? They were amazed at His knowledge, and put to silence by His wisdom. Without intending to depreciate the learning of today, I may express my conviction that Jesus Christ was a profounder student of the Old Testament than any man since His time, and that he had a truer and deeper insight into the whole spirit and purpose of that volume than has been gained by any scholar of our day."

there are clear expositions of the Catholic belief,* and arguments which completely demolish the rationalistic attempts to discredit the "Faithful and True Witness," and which moreover triumphantly vindicate the believer in his appeal to the Great Master. "It does seem strange," says the good Bishop, "that we should have to pause and vindicate the rightfulness of such an appeal. If those who labor and are heavy laden are invited to come to Him, surely those who are in doubt and difficulty as to the nature of an intregal portion of God's Holy Word may come to Him, nay, must come to Him, if they are to hope to find rest to their souls."

One point there is connected with the question before us, which I do not think has been made as prominent as it should have been ; I mean the bearing which our Lord's relationship to the Father, as "His Word," has upon the character of His testimony. If, as He declares, throughout the Gospel of St. John, nothing which He did or said was self-originated ; if it was the mind of the Father He was expressing, the doctrine of the Father He was teaching, nay, the words of the Father He was speaking, that is to say, if He spake only as He was moved, prompted and taught by His Father, then none of those limitations, which are said to have belonged to His humanity, could in the least degree affect the value of His testimony. Still the communications which He made to men would be infallibly true, as being derived from an omniscient and perfect source—from the Only Wise God. Here, surely, we

*"For as being made man He hungers and thirsts and suffers with men, so with man He knows not but according to the Godhead only, being in the Father as the Word and Wisdom He knows, and there is nothing of which he is ignorant." — Athanasius, quoted in the Church Times.

have reached the end of controversy on this matter. Here, surely, we have an irremovable basis for an unfeigned belief in all the canonical Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testaments. We believe Jesus Christ to be the Eternal Word of God, and from that starting-point we find Him stretching forth His arms on either side to establish the truth of Holy Scripture—backward to the Old Testament to which He constantly appealed, and forward to the New Testament, as He commissioned His apostles to teach and to write, promising them the intallible guidance of the Holy Ghost.

The third division of my subject now remains for me to make a few remarks upon, namely, the Effects of the New Criticism upon Christian faith.

Of course the great underlying questions are the Authority and Inspiration of Holy Scripture.

The advocates of the modern system tell us with confidence that the adoption of their novel views will leave these matters unchanged, but this only shows what blind guides they are. It is simply impossible that this should be the case when we consider the nature of that system. We cannot impress it too strongly on our minds that the new criticism is not simply investigations into the literary history of the Books, their origin, their dates, their styles, their relation to each other, and to the whole volume of which they are constituent parts. With inquiries of this kind we have the fullest sympathy. No one would think of disputing their value or service to the Church. The criticism in question is of a different kind altogether. It is a criticism the essence of which is the negation of the supernatural, and the determination to re-write the whole story of the Israelitish religion to suit rationalistic and evolutionary ideas, and which employs in its analysis of the books eminently deceptive methods. When Canon

Driver, therefore, states that the higher criticism "does not touch either the authority or inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old Testament," he is simply deceiving himself or trying to throw dust in the eyes of his readers, for he must know that after the critics have completed their work upon the Bible there is no OLD Testament left. It is—and the expression is becoming current—a NEW Bible.

That this may be fully understood, let us examine this romance of impossible canon building, only equalled by one of Rider Haggard's romances of impossible life. Opening, then, the "New Bible," we find that the early accounts in the Pentateuch (if we may still use the term), of the Fall, of Noah, the Flood, and so forth, are "myths." That Abraham and the patriarchs are heroic figures of a legendary character ; further on, we find that the Sinaitic Tabernacle is an idealized representation, i. e., a fictitious creation, suggested by the Temple of Solomon, and designed to carry back what were really the conceptions of a later time to the hoary antiquity of the Mosaic epoch. Going on, we find that the whole Levitical system of the ceremonial law was the slow growth of successive generations, finally perfected and completely codified by the priests in the post-exilic period ; we find, moreover, that Judges, Samuel, and Kings are remodelled history, with numerous accretions and corruptions, especially in the history of King David. Coming to the prophets, we find that what they delivered as express messages of God, were really the outcome of their own reflections and sagacious anticipations of what was going to happen ; or their so called "predictions" were written after the events referred to. Isaiah is the patchwork of two or more Isaiahs, while Daniel is the production of some great unknown in the time of the Maccabees. The Psalms are very late productions, scarcely any were writ

ten by David, certainly not those ascribed to him in the New Testament. We look through the "New Bible" in vain, for any genuine Messianic predictions. The miracles, we discover, are the imaginative embellishments of the ancient stories that grew up in the course of centuries." Such is the kind of Bible that even the moderate higher critic would place in our hands, and if it be the true Bible—the true story of Israel's history—then the old Bible, according to Moses and the prophets, is from beginning to end a mockery and a fraud, and though it may still be an interesting collection of documents for critics and antiquarians, its authority as an inspired account of God's revelation of Himself to men, and as a touch-stone of truth and doctrine, is gone forever. No longer can its utterances be quoted as the end of controversy.

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of this question. The authority of Holy Scripture was the great subject of the Reformers' conflict with Rome. Rome exalted the Apochrypha, Tradition and Decrees into co-equality with the Scriptures, whilst the Reformers contended that the Scripture only was the Word of God and therefore infallibly true and authoritative, and alone authoritative ; and this their judgment respecting Holy Scripture they have unequivocally expressed in the Articles and Formularies by them authorized. And from the time when England through her national Church honoured God by honouring His Holy Word, will any one who reviews her history for the last three hundred years and over, and contrasts it with that of other countries (France, Italy, Spain, where the Bible has not been similarly recognized and disseminated) deny that she has been marvellously privileged and protected, whilst war and destruction were devastating the neighbouring continent ?

But now we witness a wonderful and alarming thing

In the Church of England. Professors of Divinity have risen up at the centres of the nation's intellectual and moral life, and dignitaries have stood up in the Church's pulpits to inculcate views of the Bible, destructive to belief in its inspiration and authority and these views are finding their way through a thousand channels to the popular mind, and diffusing abroad an atmosphere of uncertainty regarding religious belief.

The men who do such things are not unacquainted with the history of rationalism in Germany and elsewhere. They are aware of the havoc it has wrought in foreign lands, how it has doubted and questioned, subtilized and analyzed, until it has made truth a phantom, sown Protestantism with the salt of barrenness, and left humanity like a ruined wreck, to drift rudderless on the dark ocean of sceptical uncertainty.* Yet these unhappy critics, unwarned and undismayed by the experience of other countries and churches, go forward in the path of ruin they have entered. Even while they are calmly telling us that the authority of Scripture is not affected by their conclusions, the question of the "Seat of Authority in religion" is becoming one of the great problems of the hour. Books on this subject have been published by scholars in

*"I am rolling rudderless," said S. T. Coleridge, in 1807, "the wreck of what I once was." "Wretched, helpless, hopeless," was his description of himself seven years later. Coleridge had drunk deep of Germanism, and on him primarily rests the responsibility of introducing it into England. Dr. Pusey, too, when as a young man he visited Germany, did not pass through it unscathed, but he was warned in time and retraced his steps, and has left as a monument of his steadfastness in Catholic belief that mine of learning his "Lectures on Daniel the Prophet," which the Higher Critics ignore because they cannot refute.

America, Scotland and England, and however divergent their ideas may be in other respects they all agree in de-throning the Bible from its place of supremacy. Dr. Martineau's words will serve to express the mind of all these writers, wherein he declares that "he rejects the Bible as the sole authority in religion, for the reason that it is not what it purports to be either as to authorship, dates, contents or trustworthiness." Of course the whole Bible is involved in this discreditment, for no one can imagine that if the Old Testament be invalidated, the New Testament would escape the same fate.

For, in the first place, the Higher Critics must in consistency apply to the New Testament the same methods which they adopt in dealing with the Old. The whole Bible must be subjected to the same critical tests. Accordingly we find Archdeacon Wilson of Manchester, at the Rhyle Church Congress (1891) after criticising away the veracity of Old Testament history, proceeding to declare with regard to the Gospels "that we can afford to acknowledge some halo of legend round a nucleus of fact." Some moderate critics, like Dr. Nichol, would like to warn their more progressive brethren from the New Testament, on the plea that the great Gospel verities should not be treated as open questions, but the critical wave flows onward and sweeps before it everything that is fundamental to the Christian Faith, as is abundantly evident in the pages of the Encyclopaedia Biblica, edited by Canon Cheyne, wherein the truth of Dr. Dale's words receive a fearful verification, "The (critical) storm has moved round the whole horizon, but is rapidly concentrating its strength and fury above one Sacred Head." But secondly, the Hebrew and Christian writings are so intimately bound up together that if the trustworthiness of the former can be disproved, the latter

must fall with it. "In Vetere Testamento Novum latet, in Novo vetus patet." "Those who would undermine the Old Testament as a reliable record, would remove that by which the claims of Christ and Christianity were established at first. They would destroy the sources from which Jesus Christ Himself and the Apostles and the Church in its first age derived the evidences of His mission." But let us follow this subject a little further down stream.

When the Higher Critics have dragged down the Bible from its seat of Sovereign authority as the veritable Word of God, what do they or their disciples propose to put in its place? They would substitute some power or quality inherent in the human breast called the "verifying faculty," or "devout reason," "universal intuition," or "the voice of God within." Says a writer in the *Arena*: "The growth of the scientific temper is nowhere more clearly traced than in the transition from the religion of the Reformation to the religion of the twentieth century. The soul of the Reformation lay in the appeal from the Church to the Bible, the life of the new theological movement is in the appeal from the Bible to the indwelling God."

Of course this nullifies utterly all external authority, and makes every man an authority to himself. "The faith of Jesus," says another writer, in the *Arena*, "took for its working basis the divinity of life, and sought to awaken in each man the Godhood that would make him a law unto himself." This suits perfectly the temper of the time; what it pleases each to believe he believes; and what it pleases him to reject he rejects; and thus an opening is made for any and every form of error to enter into the

morally diseased hearts of fallen men, which they may choose under Satan's inspiration to imagine.*

Such being the Spirit of the age, what wonder that the days in which we live should be fraught with solemn and alarming import. We have it from the lips of the most faithful watchmen on Zion's battlements that the night of evil appears to be growing darker. They tell us that the masses are growing more and more alienated from every form of religious belief, while the cultured classes are largely leavened with the materialistic teachings of our physical Scientists. Theology, too, is undergoing a change.† The old forms of religious thought are passing away, and

*To what height of impiety men may reach when they throw off the restraints of a belief in the Divine inspiration and authority of the Bible, and acknowledge no authority but their own wish and will is but too plainly exemplified by the words of Dr. Herron in an address to a crowded audience, in New York recently.

"The New religion," he said, "must take life as its own law and protection, and common human experience as its Scripture, for we ourselves are the true Holy Bible. In life man will always read the title to his own true Godhood. By the same law he will see that he must achieve his own freedom. The New religion must bind each man to nothing save to put no bonds upon any of his brothers, and leave every soul to be God's adventurer. Human life must itself become the New religion and daily toil of hand and mind the Worship. The human individual is the divinest and wisest force we know. * * * Men will respond only to an era making Word of tremendous and divine significance. The world waits for that Word—the daring Word which shall tell the average man he is a God to be revered." (Compare II. Thess. ii.: 3, 4.)

†Dr. Delitzsch in the *Expositor* of April, 1880, remarks that there lies between the Old and New theology a deep gulf—a gulf not less deep than separates Ptolemy from

new ideas of a naturalistic evolutionary character are taking their place. A laxity of morals is everywhere a subject of complaint. Between the church and the world the moral distinctions are gradually vanishing, because the Church is sinking down to the world's level. There seems to a growing inclination among professing Christians to sacrifice a sense of duty and divine obligation, to self-will, interest, or pleasure. Sunday desecration is also increasingly prevalent and threatens to turn that holy day into a common holiday.

No one can view without anxious foreboding this rising flood of scepticism and demoralization. It must increase unto more and more ungodliness as the fruits of the growing denial and rejection of Divine authority in the world and in the Church develop more and more. Take from men, who have once bowed to the authority of God's Word and then cast it from them, the steadying influence which has been brought to bear upon them by such submission. Teach men to burst asunder the bands which reverence for Divine law and Divine truth has hitherto imposed on them and what must follow but lawlessness; men will become "as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things, which have no ruler over them." Moreover, the barriers to unrestrained individual liberty of thought and action having been destroyed, society and governments will be left naked and bare to many and many a danger from popular licentiousness.

It appears to me to be only too evident, from the present aspect of Christendom, that the decay of faith

Copernicus. For of one of these systems God is the Sun and Centre, illuminating every corner of Holy Writ with the light of His revealed truth; on the other all is of earth earthy, fallible man is the pivot on which everything turns.

before the end of predicted by our Lord, and the latter-day apostacy foretold by His apostles have now begun to set in, and that the disintegration and confusion thereby produced will become so intolerable that men will seek to escape from it by placing themselves under some hand strong enough to protect their temporal interests from disorder and ruin, and that hand will be found in ANTI-CHRIST. But the instructed Christian, seeing in all these things as they come to pass, the exact fulfilment of many a saying of prophet and apostle, will turn with increasing confidence and singleness of purpose to the Living Oracles, and loving Christ he will keep His Word, even as he who loves Him not contemns His Word, little thinking that the Word he thus despises is the Father's who sent the Son, and that it will judge him at the last day, for "THE GRASS WITHERETH AND THE FLOWER FADETH, BUT THE WORD OF OUR GOD SHALL STAND FOREVER."

I will now with a few strong words from Gladstone's pen bring these remarks to a close :

"I have placed in the foreground of these observations the high sounding title of "The impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture," because they convey in a positive and definite manner the conclusion my observations aim at sustaining, and enforcing as a great rule of thought and life. They lead upwards and onwards to the idea that the Scriptures are well called Holy Scriptures ; and that though assailed by camp, by battle, and by mine, they are nevertheless a house builded upon a rock, and that rock impregnable, that the weapon of offence which shall impair their efficiency for practical purposes has not yet been forged, and that the sacred Canon, which it took (perhaps) two thousand years from the accumulations of Moses down to the acceptance of the Apocalypse to construct, is like to wear

out the storms and the sunshine, and all the wayward observations of humanity, not merely for a term as long, but until time shall be no more."

[FINIS.]